

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, we do know one thing, we have competition in Ohio for who is going to build those highways; but in Iraq we know it is going to be Halliburton and the rest of the hand-picked construction companies which will be pocketing the profits.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, we understand and I continue to hear the word "recovery." We know it is a jobless recovery, but it is not a jobless recovery for those who live in Iraq. It is a lot of no-show jobs going on over in Iraq. And as we discussed in our last session, certain individuals are doing very well by the American taxpayers. There is a budget for Iraq, and there is a budget for the United States; and they are both being paid for by the American taxpayer.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I was watching television over the weekend, and I saw Mr. Richard Pearl being interviewed about why we are trying to provide universal health care for Iraq. He was trying to give the reasons why that was justified. He was asked, What about the American citizen? He said Well, it is a different situation. The problems of health care in Iraq are so terrible, and this is something we ought to pursue.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are kind, caring, gracious people; but they have a hard time understanding why the steelworkers losing their jobs along the Ohio River, and as a result of bankruptcy of the steel industry, losing their health benefits as retirees, many of them in their mid-fifties with health problems, no insurance company wants them; and even if they could get an insurance company that would sell them a policy, they could not possibly afford it because they have no job, and these people are wondering why we have a double standard when it comes to our willingness to do what this administration, this President says he wants to do for Iraq when the people who built this country worked hard, played by the rules, many of them fought in our wars, are wondering why they are considered to be second priorities instead of first priorities. I think that is a legitimate issue. I wish I was in Cleveland tomorrow and had an opportunity to talk to the President while he was there. I would like to ask him those questions on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the President's remarks this evening. They were transmitted on CNN. He described those who are concerned about the outsourcing of American jobs, with an implication that somehow those who have a concern about jobs in America are something less than free and fair traders, and that is T-R-A-D-E-R-S, and should be called economic isolationists.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I think it is important in this discussion to say we are as hopeful as credibility can allow for the ultimate outcome in Iraq. We are hope-

ful that this constitution in Iraq will bear benefits, that a stable government will develop in Iraq, that the Kurds will enter a federation and not end up in a civil war. We are hopeful that will happen.

But what we are saying is we need the administration to be honest with us and the American people so we can deal with challenges at home, one of which is this jobs issue. We could be creating thousands of good-paying jobs by creating new infrastructure, but we cannot do that because this administration has not been forthright with us about the true cost of the Iraq war. One of the reasons that we are not growing jobs in this country in transportation infrastructure is because the President has refused to be honest with us about the cost of the Iraq war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And be honest with us about the cost of the prescription drug benefit proposal put forth by his party and his White House.

Mr. STRICKLAND. And be honest with us about the true cost of the No Child Left Behind education bill. It starts adding up.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it comes down to the question posed here on the cover of Time magazine, Does Bush have a credibility gap? And clearly there is substantial evidence that would lead to the conclusion that there is a profound credibility gap.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the trenchant commentary that the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) just presented to us, I too am aware of the designation by Mr. Bush by those who are protesting or are concerned about the outsourcing of jobs overseas, the loss of jobs, the jobless recovery as being economic isolationists.

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I would suggest to Mr. Bush that if you want to see someone who is isolated economically, just take a look at somebody who is unemployed. Then you are going to understand what true isolation is, where you are bereft of any capacity to pay your bills, to meet your obligations, to know that you will have healthcare, to be able to take care of your elderly parents, to have some semblance of dignity. The true economic isolate in this country is the person who is unemployed.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield, I would offer a theory perhaps as to why the administration has in numerous ways expressed kind of a tone deafness to the economic outcry to people going on concerned about their jobs.

You saw the administrative report basically saying that outsourcing was not a problem at all, which the White House then tried to disavow, even though the President signed the report which said that, which I saw in the Washington Post today. You saw various efforts by the administration to teach businesses how not to pay overtime to American employees, which I

thought was a little bit not what most people would expect of our government to do and use our taxpayer dollars, to teach people not to pay legally-owed overtime. That is distressing.

So there is a lack of understanding, and I am not sure the administration understands the huge black cloud of doubt and worry out there, because the American people understand that even though there might be some good numbers out there in various economic indicators, the fact of the matter is, for the first time since Herbert Hoover was President, this President has not created one single net job in America, not one single net job in America.

We have lost over 2.5 million jobs. We have got to get 2.5 million jobs back before we can even claim that one new job has been created on a net basis in this country. This has created enormous anxiety, as it should, in our Nation, that then affects the people.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is only half of the story. I think it is very important that those that are watching us tonight in our hour "hour of conversation" understand that not only have we lost millions of jobs, but, as the gentleman indicated, we create and we lose, and it is netted out to some 2.5 million jobs we have lost. He will be the next Herbert Hoover. But, do you know what is happening? It is not just a jobless recovery, it is a wage recession. That is really important, that those that are unaware be given that information. The jobs that are replacing the jobs that are lost are coming in at a wage level some 22 percent less than the jobs that they replace.

Mr. STRICKLAND. If the gentleman will yield, I am from Ohio, and Ohio probably as much or more than most States has suffered and is continuing to suffer from job loss. 286,000 jobs have been lost in Ohio, 160,000 manufacturing jobs, and the replacement jobs are estimated to pay on average 34 percent less than the jobs that have been lost. That is the cold, hard facts about Ohio.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. As we conclude then, I might add, however, there are plenty of jobs for those who want to take them up over in Iraq working for Halliburton or working for one of the other companies that got the preferential treatment. So I think when we come to our next "Iraq Watch," we should have well in mind what the consequences have been for the American people, the American taxpayer, the American soldier.

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CORRECTION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2004 AT PAGE H531

(The following removal of name of Member as cosponsor was inadvertently attributed to Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.)